An Honest Relationship

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An Honest Relationship

by crystalusagi

Summary

Will discusses therapy, Abigail, and personal relationships with Hannibal in Amuse Bouche.

Notes

This can work as a standalone but refers to scenes from Strange Intimacy, the last fic in the series. I would definitely read that first, if you can. =)

Thanks to TiggyMalvern for the beta read-through. <3

See the end of the work for more notes

The phone buzzes for four long, drawn-out beats before it cuts off. The text comes a few minutes later, and Will's pulse quickens when he sees the message: *Will, this is Hannibal Lecter. Dr. Bloom told me I should call you to set up an appointment.*

He unlocks his car and slides into the driver's seat, jaw clenched for no reason he can discern except that Hannibal Lecter is texting him—*calling* him—so soon after his encounter with Crawford and Alana. He forces himself to exhale slowly, and then switches to his missed calls log to tap on the most recent number.

The phone picks up on the second ring, and Will hears the whisper of an indrawn breath before the person on the other line speaks. "Hello?"

Will closes his eyes at the sound of Hannibal's voice. He swallows, and tries for a greeting of his own. "Hello, Dr. Lecter."

"Will," Hannibal says, as if it surprises him to hear from Will. Does he not have caller ID? His voice is warm on the syllable of Will's name, like he's tasting it on his lips, savoring it like wine. "How are you?"

Will resists the urge to grumble when he answers, but just barely. "As well as can be expected. Crawford and Dr. Bloom both think I need a psych eval."

"I'm aware." A tactful silence. Will leans back against the headrest and glares out the window at the people filtering out of the building and into their cars.

"Just say it," he prompts Hannibal after a while.

"Alana approached me today and asked me if I would be willing to take you on." Hannibal is only divulging what Will already suspects.

"And I suppose you told her yes." Will tries not to feel bitter about being a pawn scraped back and forth across a worn chessboard.

"I told her I would have to speak to you about it first."

"Why?" It's more difficult to discern Hannibal's intentions when Will can't see him, can't read the tiny expressions on his face. Just as well, since Will isn't sure he's up to the task. Not with Hannibal.

Something that sounds like a sigh on the other line. "It might be better to have this conversation face to face. Are you free now? I've seen my last patient for the day so we should have some time to ourselves."

The thought of being alone with Hannibal again, for the first time since Hannibal's hotel room, fills Will with a wonderful, scintillating dread. He nods, and then realizes that Hannibal can't see him over the phone, so he hums a sound of assent instead. "Okay."

"I will text you the address. I will see you in…shall we say ninety minutes' time?"

“I’ll be there.”

Hannibal’s office is an open space, elegant in red, beige and muted blue, with an array of plush furniture that invites the weary traveler to sit and rest. Will feels immediately comfortable here, and he is all at once resentful of the feeling.

“What conversation is it you wanted to have?” he asks, pacing across the carpeted floor to the ladder that leans against the railings of a balcony lined completely with bookshelves. He places his back against it, feels the solid wood digging into his flesh, a steadying influence.

Hannibal stands by his desk. He rests a hand lightly on the chair there. “You must know that Dr. Bloom’s reason for choosing me as your psychiatrist is rooted in her belief that our relationship is not personal.”

Will’s hand twitches on a rung of the ladder, fingertips catching against the grain of the wood. “She said as much, yeah.”

“And you didn’t refute her.” Not a question, but a statement. Hannibal’s expression is carefully curious, his head tilted just a fraction to the side.

“Was I supposed to?” He turns his back to Hannibal and, without quite knowing what his purpose is, begins to climb the steps. He stands perusing the books on Hannibal’s shelves, gliding his fingers across the spines lined on an entire shelf, though not reading any of the titles themselves. “It isn’t as if we’re—”

He stops and slides a book out at random, flipping it open to inhale the scent of the old pages. He closes it again. “We *have* no relationship. Personal or otherwise.” He isn't sure that's entirely true, but he makes the most of the words, lets himself become convinced.

“I see,” is all Hannibal says.

When Will turns around to look down at him, Hannibal’s eyelashes are long and tawny as he blinks. Hannibal stares down at his hand, which still rests on the back of his chair, fingers denting the soft brown leather. The sight elicits a prick of something peculiarly like guilt in Will’s chest.

“Look, if this is going to be a problem I can ask Alana to find someone else. Or you could give me a referral yourself.”

Hannibal lifts his head to look at him. The corner of his mouth twitches minutely, but that is all the reaction he has to Will’s words. “Is that what you would like, Will?”

Will exhales, a loud release that does nothing to ease the frustrations building up in him. “What I would *like* is to not need a psych eval in the first place,” he bites out.

“Would that it were possible for me to grant your wish.” Hannibal says it so gently, so sincerely that the guilt in Will’s chest stings even more. “Will,” he says, and looks down,

back at his hand on the chair for a second before returning his eyes to Will. “I need you to understand that while I am evaluating you as a patient, nothing could occur between us.”

“What do you expect to occur between us?” There’s a sudden and unexpected ache in his chest, right between the ribs; Will wonders if it is his own discomfort he feels, or Hannibal’s.

“I suppose nothing more than has already happened,” Hannibal says, and then he takes a few steps forward. For a moment Will thinks Hannibal is going to climb up the ladder and join him, and he almost recoils at the idea of him and Hannibal in this narrow corridor of books, nowhere to go but backwards and forwards until the inevitability of their meeting. His hand tightens on the book he holds.

But Hannibal pivots and turns, putting his back to Will. He pulls a sheet of paper from underneath a pile of books under his desk, and then he’s turns around again, coming even closer. The paper flutters in the air as Hannibal holds it out in one hand, as if presenting it to Will.

“What’s that?”

Hannibal’s voice is matter-of-fact and professional. They are discussing business now. “Your psychological evaluation. You are totally functional and more or less sane.” There is a small quirk of his lips which Will feels himself mirroring unconsciously. “Well done.”

“Did you just rubber stamp me?”

“Yes,” Hannibal replies succinctly. “Jack Crawford may lay his weary head to rest knowing he didn't break you and our conversation can proceed unobstructed by paperwork.” Will watches as Hannibal’s hand trails slowly up his thigh to dip into the pocket of his pants, not to retrieve something or put anything back—his hand is empty and remains empty when he drops it down to hang at his side again. No, it’s an involuntary motion, Hannibal’s restlessness given physical form.

“Jack thinks I need therapy.” He doesn’t know where he’s going with this. Doesn’t like the sudden pull he feels in his chest when he looks at Hannibal, at the paper Hannibal has laid before him. *What does it mean, for him to give me this?* Will tries to separate what he wants it to mean from what he knows of Hannibal, and he can’t. It becomes a jumble of tangled thread inside his head.

Hannibal’s words snap him away from his thoughts. “What you need is a way out of dark places when Jack sends you there.”

“The last time he sent me into a dark place, I brought something back.”

“A surrogate daughter?” Hannibal asks, his eyes never leaving Will’s face for a second. “You saved Abigail Hobbs' life. You also orphaned her. That comes with certain emotional obligations, regardless of empathy disorders.”

This isn’t the direction Will expected Hannibal to take, and he frowns for a moment, walking back and forth among Hannibal’s books, turning over the word *daughter* in his mind. “You

were there. You saved her life too. Do you feel obligated?"

"Yes," comes Hannibal's swift answer. "I feel a staggering amount of obligation. I feel responsibility. I've fantasized about scenarios where my actions may have allowed a different fate for Abigail Hobbs."

Will breaks the eye contact, lets his gaze wander across the space of the office, taking in the stark contrast of Hannibal's striped curtains; all the paintings on the wall; the rare artifacts displayed in the cabinet against one wall. He forces the words out past his lips. "Jack thinks Abigail helped her dad kill those girls."

Silence lingers in the air like a mist, and then it evaporates, replaced by the soft sigh of Hannibal's suit jacket slipped off his body. Out of the corner of his eye Will sees Hannibal moving. Before he realizes his intention, Hannibal is at the bottom of the ladder. It creaks as he begins to climb.

"How does that make you feel, Will?" His question floats up to Will, not so far away anymore, and Will has to resist the urge to step back, to move away from the top of the ladder. Instead, he draws closer, leans over to watch as Hannibal makes his way up, each movement putting temporary creases into his immaculate clothes.

"How does that make *you* feel?"

In another minute, Hannibal stands before him amongst the books, one hand resting lightly on the railing. His expression is solemn as they regard one another. "I find it vulgar."

"Me too."

Hannibal continues in the same tone of voice. "And entirely possible."

"It's not what happened," Will says sharply.

The other man steps forward. Will smells the faint hint of citrus that he always associates with Hannibal now, clean and bright. "Jack will ask her when she wakes up. Or he will have one of us ask her."

Will draws in a slow breath, letting the smell of Hannibal's shampoo flood his senses and remembering that night, those fleeting moments when he'd been wet and naked and wrapped in Hannibal, each of them acting as a shield for the other from the outside world. "What is this?" he asks, and can't keep the tremor out of his voice. His fears about being in this enclosed space with Hannibal aren't unfounded, after all.

Hannibal only stares back at him, immutable, as if waiting for Will to continue. Will's eyes flicker to his hand resting on the railing, watch as the tips of Hannibal's fingers trail across polished wood, and he remembers how those fingers felt on his soap-slicked skin.

He forces himself to say something, just to fill the silence with something other than the images of Hannibal in that shower stall, long elegant fingers digging into Will's flesh. "Is this therapy, or a support group?"

There. Except the question doesn't sound as sardonic as he means it to; it carries the weight of actual curiosity—of hope, even.

"It's whatever you need it to be," Hannibal replies, fixing him with a look that manages to convey honesty and empathy in equal measure.

It's the honesty that gets him. He looks into Hannibal's brown eyes, as clear as amber, and knows that Hannibal means it. Whatever Will needs.

So what does he need? His mind races in a dozen different directions: visions of the nightmare creature lurking on the edge of consciousness; Abigail's pale face, surrounded by all those flowers of condolences; Garrett Jacob Hobbs' voice asking him to *see*. He snatches at the image that is least objectionable and pins it down. Hannibal Lecter, kneeling on a slippery tile floor with water cascading over him, taking Will's cock in his mouth with a look of sheer abandon displayed all across his face.

"What if I need it to be you on your knees in front of me?" Will asks, the question coming out in a quiet rush, like water spilling irrevocably from a tipped glass. It lies there between them, liquid and spreading.

There's a barely there twitch to Hannibal's mouth, a hair's width widening of his eyes, and then he licks his lips, swallows visibly, and sinks down onto his knees. He tips his head back and gazes up at Will, waiting.

Will lets out a shuddering exhale. He wasn't hard a minute ago, but he's well on his way there now. With shaky fingers he undoes the buckle of his belt, watching Hannibal's face for signs of bolting, for any sign at all that this isn't okay for Hannibal. He finds nothing there but acceptance and a bone-deep desire, which Will feels in the back of his mind like rain beating down on rock, wearing tiny holes into the impenetrable surface.

"Is this what you need, Will?" Hannibal's voice rumbles deep in his chest, low and sultry. He reaches up to press the palm of his hand against Will's growing erection through the fabric of his underwear. Will hisses at the contact, falls away from the railings. Hannibal follows, moving gracefully even on his knees, until he has Will up against a bookshelf, the wood pressing against his spine.

Much like his inability to differentiate his own desires from Hannibal's earlier, he finds it difficult now to separate the lines between what he needs and what he *wants*—wants so deeply it's akin to need. Instead of answering, Will hooks his fingers under the elastic of his underwear and tugs it down, baring himself to Hannibal. Hannibal, who licks his lips again as he studies Will's arousal like he wants to capture it in his memory. Then he closes his eyes and leans in and *sniffs* audibly.

Will experiences an instant of mortification as he remembers just how long it's been since he left the house. He's been walking around the classroom all day, and he must smell—

His thoughts are banished by the press of Hannibal's lips, still slightly wet from his saliva, right at the base of his cock on the spot just above his balls. He lets out a choked gasp.

“I will never tire of your scent, Will,” Hannibal tells him. Will can feel Hannibal’s lips moving, each puff of warm air against the underside of Will’s cock sending shivers up his spine. “I’ve been yearning to taste you like this all night.”

“So do it,” Will mutters. His eyes fall shut, his head tilts back to push against Hannibal’s leather-bound books as Hannibal’s hand curls around him and the heat of Hannibal’s mouth envelops him. He grips the bookshelf behind him for support, sweaty hands slipping on the polished wood, and lets himself focus on the sensations Hannibal is drawing from him.

It doesn’t take long. He’s been on edge since the moment he heard Hannibal’s soft ‘hello’ over the phone earlier, and when Hannibal’s hands slide back to cup his ass and urge him forward, Will can’t help the moan that escapes him. Can’t help moving his hips forward yet again, and again, fucking into Hannibal’s mouth, down Hannibal’s throat. Hannibal lets him do it, squeezes the flesh of Will’s ass in clear encouragement and takes what Will gives him. Will comes just as Hannibal’s eyes flutter shut after one particularly rough thrust; Will drops a hand to Hannibal’s hair to stroke through the soft strands as Hannibal swallows him down.

Hannibal stops sucking just before Will gets too sensitive, but he holds Will’s softened penis in his mouth for a few seconds longer, stretching out the intimacy of the moment, an echo of his careful hands in the hotel shower. Will wants to pull back, but he's up against the bookshelf and he has nowhere to go.

But it isn’t an issue, because by the time the thought intrudes, Hannibal has already withdrawn, sliding back and then standing up. He passes hands over himself, straightening his clothes and rearranging his hair within seconds so that he’s as immaculate as ever. No indication that he was ever on his knees sucking Will’s cock except for the obscene tent in his trousers.

Will stares at that obvious bulge and then at Hannibal’s lips, which are slightly red and swollen. Yes, okay, so that’s an indication, too. On impulse, he steps forward and pulls Hannibal in for a kiss. And yeah, he can taste himself, too. He can smell himself on Hannibal. He breathes it in and begins to rock against Hannibal’s body as relief courses through him. He doesn’t let himself think about why *relief* is the chief emotion that arises from this situation right now.

Hannibal makes a small sound at the back of his throat when Will spins them around so that it’s Hannibal’s back pressed against the bookshelf. He stares, eyes full of a wonder that leaves Will breathless and so near arousal again it’s ridiculous, and doesn’t stop staring as Will rocks and rocks his thigh against that hot, hard length underneath Hannibal’s clothes. When Hannibal finally comes, it’s just a sharp, trembling exhale and a jerk of his hips up against Will. Then he stills, eyes falling shut.

Will watches the movements behind his eyelids, and the bobbing of his throat as he swallows before opening his eyes to speak. “The mirrors in your mind can reflect the best of yourself, Will,” he says, and his eyes are soft as they caress the contours of Will’s face, “not just the worst of someone else.”

Despite everything, or maybe because of it, Will smiles. “You think so?”

“I know it.” There is such conviction in Hannibal’s answer that Will almost thinks he can believe him.

End Notes

Your kudos will be snuggled and your comments snogged! <3

Here is a link to the tumblr post for reblog, if you are inclined to make me even happier =)

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